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THE TRAINING OF HIGH-SCHOOL TEACHERS¹

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The extraordinary growth of high schools creates a constantly increasing demand for teachers. The supply of available college graduates, professionally trained and untrained, apparently keeps up with this demand. In some of the men's colleges, however, the number of those who look forward to teaching school is far less than twenty years ago. In times of business prosperity, young men leaving college are naturally attracted by commercial pursuits. Last year 277 new high-school teachers, including those of industrial or technical subjects, were employed in New Jersey alone. From the colleges of the state were graduated last June not more than five young men who became teachers in public schools anywhere.

It is to be borne in mind that many high schools are in small cities and towns, where salaries are low. Large cities, where salaries are more respectable, can, of course, require more training from candidates for high-school positions.

In this paper it is assumed that there are four possible means of training high-school teachers. These are: first, academic training; second, study of education; third, observation of teaching; fourth, practice teaching.

It is desirable that a high-school teacher should have the scholarship represented by a degree from a college or university. The state of California demands of teachers without experience one year of postgraduate study. It is the only American commonwealth, so far as I know, whose standards in scholarship for secondary teachers approach the standards of German schools. We all know, however, effective and valuable teachers in high schools who are not possessors of degrees, or whose scholarship is of the self-made variety, among whom are some who have been promoted to

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the high school from the ranks of elementary teachers. Many of the normal schools throughout the country are doing creditable work in the training of teachers for secondary schools. Most of these teachers, however, find their way into the smaller high schools. That broad and accurate scholarship, however obtained, is a great factor in successful teaching is a commonplace universally recognized. Before postgraduate standards for secondary teachers can be made to obtain generally, it will be necessary to offer considerably larger financial inducements to such teachers than usually prevail. This cannot be said with too much emphasis. It is a condition that lurks in the background of any discussion concerning how much training it is practicable to demand.

Specialization in subject-matter is often too narrow on the part of college graduates who wish to teach. The opinion is expressed that overemphasis upon specialization is not well for the student as an individual. It usually does not add value to the graduate as a teacher in the high school, large or small. In the exigencies of high-school program-making it is often necessary to assign more than one subject to a teacher.

The secondary teachers of Germany and France must show mastery for teaching purposes in at least three subjects; one of these must always be in the vernacular.

I know of a superintendent of schools who went to an important university in quest of a high-school teacher of botany. He was asked at the well-organized bureau for the placing of teachers what particular brand of botany the teacher would be called upon to teach. It was an embarrassing question. The inference was natural that upon the answer to the question would depend the presentation of candidates.

Is it too much to say that prospective teachers should be guided by college faculties to choose as subjects of study groups of related or allied subjects? Obviously this "steering" cannot be done unless the college is in close touch with the actual demands of the high schools.

Courses in education afford another means of training. These courses are now generally offered in colleges and universities. Perhaps further progress in this kind of training must be looked

for chiefly in increasing the supply of well-trained and able men to conduct the courses.

The worth of such courses may be said to consist in the creation of a professional outlook or attitude toward the work of the high school. Neither the public nor the great mass of teachers is inclined to regard teaching as a profession. The withdrawal of a teacher to enter another occupation, so common in this country, is very rare in the German schools. "It is the professional spirit which every German teacher feels, that differentiates him from his species in the other countries, and this spirit is the result chiefly of training in education itself."

The discouraging indifference concerning educational questions which characterizes some high-school teachers is less likely to be found among those who have had courses in some of the problems of the secondary school, in psychology applied to teaching and in social education. Young teachers with a theoretical knowledge of one or more of these problems approach, as a rule, the work of the high school in a different state of mind from those in whose consciousness there is no glimmer of the existence of such problems.

The value of courses in education is also likely to be determined as the value of other courses is determined, by the character of the teaching in the department of education. Interest and enthusiasm must be created. The value of such courses is likewise determined by the attitude of other departments toward the education department. The department of education must not be merely tolerated; it must be supported as cordially as other departments. It is said to be a fact that in the past the school of education has not always been looked upon with respect by other departments. In proportion as this attitude is reflected in the minds of prospective teachers, the work in education is handicapped.

The professor who scoffs at the study of education is likely to be the man who complains the loudest about the inadequate preparation of students for college. He overlooks the fact that some of this inadequate preparation is the result of untrained college graduates in the high schools, for one of whom he may have written a glowing letter of recommendation as to his classroom ability. It would be interesting to see this type of the educational stand-

patter, the despiser of methods, attempt to teach a class of grammar-grade boys and girls. Most high-school pupils are still boys and girls.

The third means of training high-school teachers is observation of teaching in schools in the neighborhood of the college or university, or on the university premises. Such observation may be of much value. This, however, is determined by the kind of teacher whose work is observed. College teachers of education are by no means oblivious to this fact. As the head of the educational department in an important university has put it: "I am convinced that it is easily possible to observe work in schools and still make very little gain. Unless the teacher has had ample opportunity to see superior teaching done in the high school, I am inclined to believe that the work will quickly drop back to the standard of excellence attained in the high school which the teacher attended."

Discrimination here is greatly needed. "If the teacher is to be observed as a model, he must not illustrate to the student how not to do it." Fine teachers cannot be found easily. They must be hunted out or discovered. To bring prospective high-school teachers into contact with able teachers in action is an end abundantly worth while. High standards of work must be established at the outset. The standards of too many teachers are low, because they have not been brought into sufficient contact with the fine art of teaching.

The prospective history teacher who observes the work of a teacher of history who talks too much, who lectures too much, who fails to discriminate in the choice of material, who is indefinite in his requirements, who cannot arouse interest or enthusiasm, who for these and other reasons fails to get hard work from pupils, is establishing for himself low standards.

The opinion is expressed that time is wasted by misdirected or underdirected visiting of schools. Interpretation of the work of the teacher observed is necessary to the prospective teacher. Passive observation without interpretation is of little value. Mere destructive criticism of the teacher's work, of a school, or a system of schools, for that matter, is cheap because there are so many ready to supply it.

The University of Wisconsin has recently, under the authorization of the state legislature, established what is known as the Wisconsin High School of the University. The university, because of its independent control of the school, is able to place carefully selected and presumably highly efficient teachers in each teaching position. The project is a commendable one, and its development is sure to be of interest to all engaged in the work of training secondary teachers.

The number of well-thought-out and well-regulated plans of observation teaching in connection with education departments appears to be increasing.

Thus far I have mentioned three of four possible ways of training high-school teachers. To these should be added a fourth kind of training, if the teacher is to be trained according to professional standards.

I refer to practice teaching. The college or university which supplements its pedagogical course and courses in observation by practice teaching is rendering a distinct and much-needed educational service, provided this teaching is under competent guidance or direction. This practice teaching is the laboratory where theory is tested. The practice school has not been developed as rapidly as its value warrants. Nothing is more firmly established than the practice school in the preparation of elementary teachers. Why not, then, for high-school teachers? Practice teaching gives confidence to the student which comes from successful doing. It gives him the point of view of the real teacher. What is this point of view? I believe it is this: Consideration of the pupil as the end of education, the subject of study as the means to be employed in his training.

Some high-school teachers, fresh from college, reverse this order. In their minds the subject is uppermost, the pupil undermost. Some high-school teachers are unable to adjust their teaching to the immature minds of pupils. By reason of this maladjustment, they consequently fail to arouse the interest of pupils, who leave school, not because they have to, but because they want to.

If the teacher goes into the high school without experience, he may become proficient, but it is more or less at the expense of the

pupil. High-school teachers who have been merely students of educational theory have had no opportunity to test the value of their theory. They should have this opportunity, using educational theory as a background. A co-ordination of theory and practice, with accompanying observation, furnishes an ideal training.

The work in practice should be real teaching. Children should not merely be practiced upon. The work is stimulating and interesting to the student-teacher in proportion as it is real. The young teacher as a rule responds quickly to the sympathetic, intelligent criticism which the practice school affords. He forms a habit in the practice school of making the work of each recitation as effective as possible. He gradually becomes a critic of his own work. This attitude he is likely to carry with him into his permanent work. It is at once the attitude of a profession and of ambition. In the small schools there is little or no supervision of secondary teaching. In the larger schools this supervision is often inadequate. Too often the teacher must "go it alone." A blunder under these circumstances is repeated indefinitely at the expense of pupils. A blunder in the practice school can be pointed out before night.

In spite of the excellent work that is done by large numbers of high-school teachers throughout the country, there is, speaking dogmatically, too much misdirected effort on the part of some teachers who are graduates of colleges. The trouble is that they have had no opportunity to learn to teach. It is natural that, fresh from college, they should be inclined to use the method employed with college Seniors of twenty-two upon the immaturity of first-year classes—children of fifteen. These conditions being true, it is not strange that the teacher and the pupil do not always understand each other, and that the teaching is not adapted to the children. Under the circumstances the children lose interest. The teacher, entirely conscientious though he be, becomes disheartened. He wonders why the pupils, as revealed in the tests, have got so little from his instruction; no small part of which has, perhaps, been given from his chair back of the desk. Too often the children work the teacher, when the teacher should work them.

In spite of the excellent work done in English, history, and

physics in the high schools, these are among the subjects which suffer most from maladjustment. Of all the crimes in the educational calendar, the forcing of adult standards upon children is among the worst.

All of this is not a reflection upon the teachers or colleges. It is merely a statement of existing conditions which will be made better, not all at once, but gradually, as the need of better-trained teachers is more fully realized, as salaries become better, and as colleges and universities find the way to establish schools of practice.

A teacher trained by means of a combination of theory, observation, and practice is more ready to be directed by the principal, superintendent, or the head of the department, assuming that principal, superintendent, or head of department is in action. Such a teacher realizes that most high-school pupils are still children, boys in short trousers and girls in short skirts. Such a teacher is likely to read a book like Chubb's *Teaching of English*, or Bagley's *Educative Process*, or Sachs's *The American Secondary School*, or James's *Talks to Teachers*, with some interest. Such a teacher is not likely to neglect teachers' conventions or associations. Such a teacher is likely to realize that the last word in education was not said fifty years ago.

The boys and girls in our high schools compose a great miscellaneous class, who come from all conditions of homes. Few will go to college. Two or three generations ago secondary pupils usually came from homes in which there were some traditions of culture. Because of this and other reasons which cannot be pointed out in the limits of this paper, the simplicity of the former school has been succeeded by the complexity of the modern school. A new sort of teacher is, therefore, demanded, if all these young people are to be trained, and not merely some of them. They need teachers who recognize differences in individuals; teachers who are open-minded to new ideals in education made necessary by new social and economic conditions.

There is abundant evidence that college teachers of education are convinced of the need of training by means of schools of practice. Such training, wherever it is possible to bring it about, would not only result in better teaching in the high school, but it

would also vitally influence the standards of the large number of young women who go from the high schools into the elementary schools by way of the normal schools. It would, therefore, be of indirect value to the multitude of children in the elementary schools. Mr. Carnegie could not do a better thing for education than to furnish \$25,000 a year for the maintenance of a good school of observation and practice, in connection with a university.

Large expense, however, is not necessary in making the beginnings of a practice school. A combination between high schools and the college or university, for the purpose of providing training facilities, is possible, because it has already been made, as will be shown later.

Administrative difficulties are in the way, it is true, but in a measure they may be overcome. Dr. John P. Brown, in his excellent book *The Training of Teachers for Secondary Schools*, presents very clearly the possible advantages both to the department of education and to the neighboring high school, as a result of co-operation for practice. The department of education would gain because of the opportunities to test out its theories in the high school. The high school would gain because of the professional stimulus which would come to regular teachers by contact with the educational department of the college.

The possibility of this co-operation is conditioned upon adequate administration, and upon sufficient facilities for direct and abundant supervision. The pupils in the high school, whose interests are paramount, should not be made to suffer. No one would propose that an entire school be used as a practice school; only a few or some of the classes would be so used. A class taught a half-year in one subject by a student-teacher whose academic specialty is that subject would not be retarded, because the critic teacher, either from the school or from the college, would be at hand.

It is to be admitted that we are a long way from the attainment of these ends in the training of high-school teachers, but a beginning has been made.

At Harvard, in the second half-year of the course in education, each student is placed in charge of a classroom in one of the high schools in Cambridge, or in a selected neighboring city. He

teaches the class under the common conditions of classroom work. He teaches three to six periods a week for a half-year, having full responsibility for the work of the class. The student is under the double supervision of a member of the department and a representative of the local school system.

Since 1908 there has been an agreement between Brown University and the city of Providence for the training of teachers by means of practice in the city schools. Candidates must have a degree from a reputable college or university. There are two types of the student-teacher. Students of the first type teach part time, and are paid by the city at the rate of \$400 a year. Students of the second type must accomplish 125 hours of observation, individual instruction, and class teaching, in a year. These are not paid. The work of all these teachers is under the supervision of a representative of the department of education, and of the city schools.

At Indiana University an agreement for practice teaching has been made between the university and the city of Bloomington, in which the university is located. Definite requirements are made of teachers before they are admitted to the practice schools, such as the maturity of judgment represented by Senior or postgraduate standing in the university, and a knowledge of general pedagogical problems. The student-teacher enters upon his work in the local high school in one of the following subjects: botany, English, history, mathematics, physical geography, or zoölogy. He works under the direction of a well-trained critic teacher. The general supervision of the whole critic school is delegated to the high-school principal, working in co-operation with the head of the department of secondary education. The student teaches one period daily, one-half of the school year. He also enrolls pupils, looks after class records, grades manuscripts, and performs in short all the phases of a regular teacher's duties. It is real teaching, both in intent and in result.

In California, as before pointed out, there must be one year of postgraduate work for inexperienced teachers, one-half of which is spent in the study of education, which usually includes practice teaching. Opportunities for practice teaching may be had either in selected high schools or in the normal schools of the state.

In an important city, half a dozen college graduates are trained each year in the grammar grades, under competent critic teachers. These young women are selected with care. They are paid moderately for their services during the half-year of their service, which is real teaching. Eventually most of them become teachers in the high schools, where their ability is recognized.

There is abundant testimony from those out on the firing-line—namely, superintendents of schools—as to the value of practice training for secondary teachers. Superintendents in a typical progressive middle western state were recently asked to express their opinion as to the value of practice training. Eighty-two out of eighty-four expressed themselves in no uncertain terms as to the need for such training.

I quote from letters from superintendents of schools in widely separated but typical parts of the country. Says Superintendent Van Sickle, of Springfield, Mass.:

There is no greater need anywhere in the service than in the high schools, for thoroughly trained teachers. There is no doubt in my mind that much of the mortality in the early high-school years is due to bad teaching; not all, of course, but a good deal. In cities like Springfield, and in large cities where the salaries are such as to enable school boards to attract high-school teachers from the smaller places, teachers can be had who by a few years' experimenting on children have developed a satisfactory method.

Says Associate Superintendent Wheeler, of Philadelphia:

We have no difficulty in securing college graduates who are well equipped with knowledge of the subjects which they desire to teach, but we find practically none who have received any training in the *teaching* of those subjects. Fortunately, we are able to secure many who have learned to teach by teaching in other places.

But the fact remains that scarcely one has been trained to teach. What high-school teachers know about teaching is almost invariably learned after they have been appointed. The colleges ought to give the prospective high-school teacher definite training in the profession of teaching.

Says Superintendent Blewett, of St. Louis:

I believe that we still have a very great weakness in our high-school work because of the lack of specific professional training of the teachers in these schools. Many of our experienced grade teachers have a very much greater skill in presenting the subjects with which they are familiar because of their better pedagogic training, because of a too narrow scholarship in the special subjects they would be called upon to teach in the high schools.

Says Superintendent Frank Cooper, of Seattle:

My own view is that high-school teachers need to be trained away from college and university standards for young people. It should be made clear to them in some way that the college or university method, while good for men and women, is not suitable for boys and girls. They should be diverted early from the idea that specialization is a saving function in the high school. In many instances the high-school teacher does not become a specialist, but a routinist. They teach one thing and teach it five times a day, acquiring facility and dexterity, but sacrificing inspirational and cultural effects. What we want in high-school teachers is power to use subject-matter as an instrument, personality, and the kind of professional spirit that warms up to man-making through teaching.

It would be possible to quote similar expressions indefinitely.

I have not attempted to discuss the training of teachers for the various phases of industrial training, which is becoming so important a part of the work of so many secondary schools.

This is the conclusion I wish to express: That of the four kinds of possible training for secondary teachers—the academic, courses in education, observation, and practice teaching—the first three are in the main satisfactorily carried on. The last, practice teaching, has not been developed as the needs of the schools demand. Opportunities for practice are available only to a limited extent. An extension of these opportunities is necessary if there is to be a real, vital preparation for teaching, as for a profession, and for increased efficiency in the high schools.